

## **LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND**

**The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on**

**May 17, 2021**

**Online Via Zoom**

**Members Attending:** Heidi Blais, John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Marcus Mitchell

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:**

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Funding Distribution Plan
- Legislative Report, May 17, 2021

### **I. WELCOME**

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:22 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

Some pending RI laws will allow LBRI meetings to continue to be held online; more information will be forthcoming.

### **II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** from the April 19, 2021 meeting

**Moved By:** Mr. Coutu

**Seconded By:** Mr. Bucci

The minutes were approved as presented.

### **III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Ms. Drnach welcomed members and thanked them for their continued commitment to the board.

### **IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT**

#### **A. OLIS Budget**

The state fiscal year ends on June 30. OLIS closes the fiscal year strongly having funded all planned projects plus a round of competitive grants while providing additional resources for libraries and Rhode Islanders through AskRI, the Statewide Reference Resource Center (SRRC) at Providence Public Library. Funds from staff positions that were vacant during part or all of FY21 were reallocated to services for libraries.

## B. OLIS Updates

### i. Open Positions

- a. The Adult Services Coordinator position originally held by Ms. Baffoni was approved for posting; the posting closes on May 27.
- b. Pablo Morales Henry has been selected to fill the Library Program Manager (LPM) position. Mr. Morales Henry comes to OLIS from Harvard's Radcliffe Institute Schlesinger Library where he held the position of Library Senior Developer and Archivist for Born-Digital Materials. He has substantial experience in the area of digitization and digital materials, including work with the Digital Public Library of America ([DPLA](#)). The LPM position oversees the Talking Books Library (TBL), the Library of RI (LORI), web development, digitization, and preservation. Mr. Morales Henry will join OLIS on June 21; his appointment will be announced in mid-June.
- c. The OLIS team has worked remotely since March 2020 and will return to the office with a hybrid-work plan over the summer. Staff performed seamlessly during remote work, providing all services without exception and going "above and beyond" to serve Rhode Island's libraries.

## C. Continuing Education (CE) Programming (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

OLIS will launch [Niche Academy](#) in June; the platform will provide access to asynchronous learning opportunities. Users will have access to previously recorded OLIS webinars, courses from state library agencies across the country, and courses developed by Niche Academy. Webinars and courses from OCLC's [WebJunction](#) will also be available. The platform's statistical data compilation functions will provide user activity data to inform OLIS' future program planning. Content will be available for all types of libraries; recommendations for content is welcomed.

OLIS resumes a full calendar of live programs in September. All CE programs are posted on the OLIS CE Calendar.

## D. RI Library Association (RILA) Annual Conference (Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

The RILA annual conference will be held virtually on June 3-4. This year's theme is "Well + Connected: Libraries and Healthy Communities". OLIS is a sponsor of the event and Ms. Baffoni is currently the conference committee chair. An event app supported with OLIS' sponsorship will provide networking and engagement opportunities for presenters, attendees, and exhibitors. Keynote speakers are Patty Wong, American Library Association (ALA) President Elect and Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina. Registration is now open.

## E. Grant Programs (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni reporting)

The LORI and Summer Reading Grants programs are underway; 60 libraries were awarded a combined total of \$473,000 for library projects and activities. Sixteen libraries received a total of \$436,000 for LORI grant projects, and 44 libraries received \$47,000 for Summer Reading programs. Jason Ackermann, OLIS Digital Resources Coordinator, built an online tool for the Summer Reading grants to provide a user-friendly and efficient grant application and reporting system for libraries.

## F. Public Library Annual Survey (PLAS) Updates

Ms. Mellor presented an overview of library job categories recommended for the PLAS; the categories have not been updated in 20+ years. A committee of librarians representing all types of public libraries convened to review library job categories and recommend changes based on current library position

and responsibilities. The committee recommended expanding the categories from 12 to 15 to accurately define library work. The updated categories will replace existing job categories when the PLAS launches in June. The work will also inform the review of the RI Public Library Standards

#### G. Reopening Libraries: Updates

The state opens at 100% capacity on May. In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), masks are not required for vaccinated people as of May 18. Libraries were notified on May 14 that they may resume most services as of May 21; libraries may use their discretion with regard to mask-wearing. OLIS recommends libraries consult and align their policies with municipal policies on mask and other requirements.

### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu and Ms. Mellor reporting)

Federal and State bills about libraries may be found on the OLIS legislative [webpage](#).

##### i. Rhode Island Legislation

S0289 – The RI Senate will vote on May 19 to amend various sections related to libraries to remove outdated provisions and update language to reflect current practices affecting library technology.

H5148 - Establishes a broadband council to create a plan to increase the use of broadband service in the state and establish a broadband coordinator to access federal funds and coordinate with the council.

RILA is working with legislators to lobby for legislation for libraries.

##### ii. Federal Legislation

There is no movement on federal bills about libraries. Ms. Mellor maintains contract with Senator Jack Reed's office to monitor library developments with the construction funding legislation (Build America's Libraries Act).

### VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

#### A. Ms. Blais

School Librarians of RI (SLRI) members gave a presentation on April 6 to the RI Council on Elementary and Secondary Education requesting that the RI Department of Education (RIDE) endorse national school library standards developed by the American Association of School Librarians. The council voted unanimously to endorse the standards and will post them on the RIDE website.

The standards endorsement acknowledges the value of school librarians and will move curriculums forward while helping establish consistent library staffing.

### VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### A. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Funding Distribution Plan

OLIS received an award of \$2,230,333 through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), which will be administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) OLIS will use the funds as outlined by IMLS ARPA guidance and in alignment with OLIS' current Five-Year Plan. Ms. Mellor presented details for ARPA fund distribution and requested board approval of the plan.

The OLIS ARPA funding distribution plan recommends funds be allocated to libraries to expand availability of digital access through current technologies and the internet, promote learning by providing resources and skill-attainment opportunities, and strengthen library services by offering training to librarians for the support of services and programs.

The fund distribution breakdown would be \$850,000 for Digital Access, \$637,293 for Learning, and \$743,040 in the forms of grants, contracted services, and services. As the fund distribution process advances, project funding would be adjusted and reallocated as required by specific project needs.

The timeline for funding activities would begin this month and conclude September 30, 2022. The final project report must be submitted to the IMLS by January 2023.

Mr. Norris inquired how funding opportunities will be publicized and noted the potential for crossover activities with organizations who may be able to make recommendations for funding. Mr. Bucci recommended posters and flyers be provided to community health centers and dentist offices to solicit participation in certain grant projects.

#### **Approval of the American Rescue Plan Act: Funding Distribution Plan**

**Moved By:** Mr. Findlay

**Seconded By:** Mr. Norris

The American Rescue Plan Act Funding Distribution Plan was approved.

#### **B. Revision of Public Library Minimum Standards**

Ms. Mellor will convene a committee meeting in the next few weeks to move forward with the Public Library Minimum Standards review.

### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

### **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

### **IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Mr. Bucci

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.